Qno1) How does democracy produce an accountable, responsive and legitimate government?

Ans: Democracy is an accountable form of government as all the citizens have the right to choose their rulers and control over them. The democratically elected government is answerable to people. If the government does not function as per the wishes of the people it would likely lose in the next election and would be thrown out of power. Whenever possible the citizens are able to participate in the decision making through formation of public opinion. Hence, the government needs to be accountable to people.

Similarly the government has to be responsive to the problems and aspirations of the people, otherwise people would choose the next better alternatives in the next elections because the democracy provides them the arrangement of regular, free and fair election and conditions for open debates.

Democracy has a legitimate government as it is elected by the people through elections. The authority of the government is based on the will of the people. It is the people who elect the government on their behalf to rule them. Thus, how far a government is legitimate in a democracy is dependent on the will and the consent of the people.

Qno2) What are the conditions under which democracies accommodate social diversities?

Ans: In most of the countries, social diversity generally exists. Every society is diverse in many ways like religion, race, caste, creed, culture etc. Democracy is considered to be the most suitable form of government to accommodate these diversities. A democratic government gives adequate representation to all groups and makes every group feel that their existence is recognized and that full justice is being done to them. Democracy ensures majority rule and at the same times safeguards the rights of minorities. In democracy minorities are given freedom to form associations and special educational rights are granted to certain minority communities. In a democracy, there should be a number of political parties and interest groups to participate in the political process. These parties shape public opinion and thus, force the government to work according to the will of the people. Power keeps on shifting among political parties and political groups so that it may not be monopolized by a section of people, as happens in a communist country. Thus, democracy accommodates social diversity in order to achieve a viable decentralized society.

Qno3) Give arguments to support or oppose the following assertions:

(a) Industrialized countries can afford democracy but the poor need dictatorship to become rich: Although examples of many countries under dictatorship suggest that economic growth can be good in such countries, yet some democracies are much better so far their economic condition is concerned. Many poor countries of the past have progressed under the democratic rule, although the growth may have been slow. Looking at the cost benefit analysis it can be said that even for a poorer country, democracy is always a better option rather than dictatorship to strive for becoming rich.

(b) Democracy can't reduce inequality of incomes between different citizens: This is a true reality that inequality of incomes cannot be reduced between different citizens, no matter which type of government system is in place. Even the past experience of Socialism in Russia and China suggest that it is almost impossible to create a society where everyone is equal in terms of economic power. The same holds true for democracy also.

(c) Government in poor countries should spend less on poverty reduction, health, education and spend more on industries and infrastructure: While it is always prudent to spend on industries and infrastructure for better employment generation, the role of social security cannot be ignored. There are many people who are so poor and oppressed that they need some sort of help to improve their condition. Poverty eradication, health benefits and education schemes should be always in place to help such people. A proper balance should be maintained in spending on social security and on industries.

(d) ***In democracy all citizens have one vote, which means that there is absence of any domination and conflict:*** In theory, it is true that the formula of one person one vote negates the effect of domination and conflict. But in the real world, a society can be very complex. It is the basic instinct of the people to dominate others at the very first opportunity. Similarly, conflicts are bound to arise in a society. However, democracy minimizes the effect of such tendency to certain extent.

Qno4) Identify the challenges to democracy in the following descriptions. Also suggest policy / institutional mechanism to deepen democracy in the given situations:

(a) ***Following a High Court directive a temple in Orissa that had separate entry doors for dalits and non-dalits allowed entry for all from the same door.***
This example shows the challenge about practicing untouchability or casteism that was banned by the constitution. In this case, the judiciary interfered in the matter and right to equality was enforced. Casteism should be eradicated from India with the help of education and awareness programmes.

(b) ***A large number of farmers are committing suicide in different states of India.***
Here the challenge is poverty. The government has to provide economic equality by promoting agriculture and diversity in agriculture, so that it raises the economic standard of the farmers.

(c) ***Following allegation of killing of three civilians in Gandwara in a fake encounter by Jammu and Kashmir police, an enquiry has been ordered.***
Here the challenge is the security of the citizens. These incidents can be avoided by practising transparency in the Police Department and their actions. The government should promote human rights.